

### III. SOCIAL LIFE

#### SOCIAL UNITS

THE UNITS with which Ramkō'kamekra individuals may be affiliated are manifold. They include (a) the individual family; (b) the matrilineal extended family; (c) matrilineal exogamous moieties; (d) nonexogamous rainy season moieties; (e) the plaza groups; (f) the plaza moieties; (g) the age classes; (h) the age-class moieties; (i) six men's societies.

Of these, the first four embrace both sexes, the remainder only men except that most of the primarily masculine organizations have each two girl associates. Membership in the matrilineal extended family and the exogamous moieties is hereditary; in the rainy season moieties, the plaza groups, and the plaza moieties it is hereditary in the sense that it hinges on the bearing of certain names transmitted from an older kinsman. An age class is constituted by joint initiation into adult status. Admission into the Clown society depends on one's talent for buffoonery; into the other societies a male enters by virtue of his names, which determine affiliation of an individual with two of the five organizations.

To the social bonds listed above may be added those involving formalized friendship; these, too, are largely connected with name transference.

Finally, there is an honorific order of hamrén, which includes both sexes.

Since membership in a number of the units listed above depends on personal names, it seems well to premise some data on their acquisition and their relationship with the units in question.

#### NAMES

Every masculine or feminine name belongs to one of the rainy season moieties—ka'makra and aty'kakra. Every masculine name belongs to one of the six plaza groups, Giant Snake, Bat, Carrion Vulture (eastern) and Armadillo, Dwarf Parrot, Alien Tribe (western); only two members of the female sex, the pepyé associates, belong to a plaza group, invariably to the Bats and the Dwarf Parrots. Every masculine name involves affiliation with two festive societies—either the Falcons and Jaguars (or the kökri't), or the Ducks and Agoutis; the girl associates of these organizations serve only for one ceremonial period.

Of the ten name sets none coincides with any other. The principle for their composition is not clear. Membership in the Clowns' organization and the tamhək is independent of names borne.

A number of masculine as well as feminine names are paired, establishing a formalized friendship, which, however, may be achieved in other ways.

Every individual, irrespective of sex, successively acquires from two to eight names. As a rule, the entire set borne by an individual is linked with a single one of the units mentioned above. In exceptional instances an individual receives a name that determines a change in one or more of the unit types.

The following is a noteworthy case. Hiino and his maternal uncle Yua (=Hiino) used to belong to the Bats (eastern plaza group), the aty'kakra (rainy season moiety), and the Falcon-kökri't pair of societies. At the time of Hiino's pepyé initiation, it devolved on his plaza group to erect for him a hut for seclusion, its yard, and a latrine, but its members limited their efforts to building the hut. This so angered Yua that he left his eastern plaza group and joined the Armadillos (western). Henceforth the names Yua and Hiino no longer belong to the Bat, but to the Armadillo series. However, both men retained membership in the aty'kakra and the Falcon-kökri't organizations.

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575 The festive societies and the King Vultures (p. 98 f.) render similar assistance to their members.

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184 But while the growth of agriculture adds to the practical work of the classes, there is diminution by the lessening importance of the communal hunts and the complete elimination of war raids.

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114 *Corrections.*—Some of my own earliest statements, as well as some of Snethlage's, require explicit correction.<sup>129</sup>

The complete initiation requires not three to five, but about ten years; the number of class leaders is two, not one; not the three, but the four youngest classes are actively engaged in sport; the terms *kō'ikateyē* and *harākatēye* do not—in this connection—designate the exogamous moieties, but their namesakes, the eastern and western class moieties; the classes meet in the houses of their *vq'tē'*, not of their commandants.

It is quite wrong to speak, as Snethlage does, of a "men's tribal society" into which boys and youths are admitted after numerous tests and ceremonies. The total number of age classes is indefinite, and their totality does not constitute one grand organization. Further, the commandants do not form the elders' council which is really made up of the survivors of no longer athletically active classes, irrespective of their previous incumbency as commandants. As already explained, an exogamous moiety is not headed by "the commandant of its (f) age class," for it has no headman at all. Finally, it is thoroughly confusing to say that a married man continues to take part in the activities of his age class, "which does not admit his wife's brothers." Since the classes have nothing to do with the exogamous moieties but are each composed of age mates of both moieties, a man and his brothers-in-law may very well belong to a single class.

THE MEN'S SOCIETIES<sup>130</sup>

575 There are six organized men's societies, which appear only during certain festivals. They are: *rop*, Jaguars; *kukén*, Agoutis; *koikayú*, Ducks; *hak*, Falcons; *kōkrj't*, Water Monster (masqueraders); *me'kē'n*, Aquatic Birds (buffoons). For convenience the last two may be referred to as Mimmers and Clowns, respectively.

Possibly the Fish companies at the *tepyarkwá* festival and the *bōcwá* at the sweet-potato ceremony might also be reckoned under this head. Not so the King Vultures, who must be put into a different category (p. 98).

The societies are referred to as *me'kwē'*, a term also applied to the age classes. A man will say, "*meikwē' pē kukén*," I belong to the Agouti society. Usually a society has some thirty members. Except for the Clowns, the organizations are entered by virtue of one's names (p. 77). Many Indians simultaneously belong to more than one society, but in that case the several societies are usually such as are not obliged to appear at the same time. For instance, one *Tunkō'* is a Falcon, a Jaguar, and a Mummer. In addition he also served as a substitute for the Little Falcon in the terminal ceremony of the *vq'tē'* season and was head of the King Vultures.

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554 Each society has a head appointed by the council and called *hōpa'hí*, like the tribal chiefs. He is chosen for his gaiety and eloquence, being expected to infuse life into the festive proceedings.

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562 Though women are not admitted to regular membership, each society has two girl associates, *mekuičwē'i*. There is no indication that they anciently represented

<sup>129</sup> Nimuendajú, Bruchstücke, 671. Snethlage, Nordostbras. Ind., 167, 169, 170.

<sup>130</sup> These societies evidently are quite distinct in function from the *Serente* men's organizations. See Nimuendajú, *The Serente*, 59-64. R. H. L.

[i.e. collective labor in harvesting --- Analyst.]

*Nimuendajú: The Eastern Timbira*

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scene over before several other Clowns came running with a small, gnarled tree from which intestines, pieces of wood, but also some slices of good meat were suspended, of which the women likewise took possession.

On the following day the boys went hunting and killed a number of small birds and steppe rats. They tied their spoils to a tree, dragged it to the plaza, and set it upright, while the little girls came running from all sides to pillage it. Other boys had tied their game to the tip of their long tuft of hair and ran across the plaza, chased by the girls, who finally despoiled them of the booty.

## GROWING GIRLS

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At the age of boys beginning to organize, the girls already assist their mothers at home and in the plantations and mostly excel them as dancers and singers in the plaza. Public opinion exacts competence in both spheres. A girl unfit for domestic and farming labor will not readily find a husband; but the collaboration of girls in the chanting and dancing that is indispensable for every festival and ceremonial is considered equally important. No Timbira mother would restrain her daughter from attending a dance on the ground of work to be done at home or in the plots. If there are too few girls in the plaza for a dance, the truants are publicly reproved by the elders, who may send specially delegated men to fetch them out of their maternal homes. One of these messengers advances the tip of his sword-club toward the girl, who is obliged to clasp it, and he then leads her by the club to the plaza. Such treatment may be accorded to girls no older than ten, and at about twelve both sexes are in the thick of the manifold socioceremonial life of age classes, festive societies, and other units.

## SOCIAL RELATIONS OF THE SEXES

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Before discussing the relations of the sexes during and prior to wedlock, I wish to state explicitly what is sufficiently apparent from the description of social structure: Neither sex considers the other inferior; the sexes have distinct functions, not higher and lower ones. Of course there are no feminine chiefs or councilors, and the religious ceremonies on behalf of the commonweal are always performed by men. Further, there is no preponderantly feminine organization. On the other hand, women not only own dwellings and plantations, but also have a claim on the children, and except in warfare nothing is undertaken without feminine participation, whence the *vu'te'* institution (p. 92), the girl associates in the festive societies and the boys' initiation (p. 95 f.), and the resulting membership of women in the *hamrén* (p. 97 f.). There is but a single wholly masculine organization, that of the King Vultures; and this is due to their comprising all the honorary chiefs, which automatically excludes women since female chiefs are unknown. The two types of formalized friendship likewise embrace both sexes, even though the circumstances in which the *kwq'nö* bond is established restrict the number of females capable of entering it (p. 104).

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In contrast to tribes with masculine societies for terrorizing women or with other methods of frightening them,<sup>22</sup> the *Ramkö'kamekra* seem to be above all interested in a merry comradeship of the two sexes. This attitude rests on the manifest appreciation of feminine personality. If a girl or woman differs in opinion from a man and agreement is hopeless, the matter is allowed to rest; it would be regarded as mean and ridiculous for a man to get angry, let alone try coercion. All relations rest on free consent within the tribal code. Accordingly rape was unknown, the

<sup>22</sup> Nimuendajú and Lowie, *The Associations of the Serénts*, 415.